



Your City, Seattle

Department Policy & Procedure

Subject: Native Plant Policy		Number 060-P 5.9.1
		Effective June 1, 2009
		Supersedes N/A
Approved: Timothy Gallagher Signature on file	Department: Parks & Recreation	Page 1 of 4

1.0 PURPOSE

As a steward of Seattle's park land and an environmental role model to Seattle's community, Seattle Parks and Recreation aims to provide landscapes for park patrons to enjoy that are sustainable in their design, construction, and maintenance practices. Sustainable landscapes using native plants conserve plants and trees that are native to the Cascadia region; protect and provide wildlife habitat and a healthy ecosystem; achieve utility conservation; and demonstrate sustainable landscape management practices to the greater community.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS/INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Staff who design, construct, and maintain Seattle Parks and Recreation landscapes.
- 2.2 Consultants, landscape architects, and park designers hired by the Department to design park landscapes.
- 2.3 Citizens, horticultural, botanical and park advocate organizations.

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 Seattle Parks and Recreation will strive to achieve sustainability in all landscape design, construction, and maintenance in order to:
 - i. Help balance human and ecological interests;
 - ii. Fully use a diversity of native plant species that are naturally adapted to local climate and soils, and that provide beauty and year-round interest;
 - iii. Mitigate the loss of ecosystem services such as stormwater filtration, flood control, and carbon sequestration caused by urbanization;
 - iv. Improve and enhance habitat for and conservation of indigenous plant and animal communities;
 - v. Contribute to the Northwest's natural beauty and sense of place;

- vi. Promote integrated pest management and reduce the use of pesticides in public landscapes;
- vii. Provide an educational forum for understanding ecological value in natural and developed landscapes

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Native plants are defined as those existing in landscapes prior to European settlement and those plants originating in the Cascadia Bioregion (see map and description, Attachment 1). The Cascadia Bioregion (also referred to as the Pacific Northwest Bioregion) encompasses all or portions of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Wyoming, Montana, Alaska, British Columbia, and Alberta. The Cascadia Bioregion claims the entire watershed of the Columbia River (as far as the Continental Divide), and the Cascade Range from Northern California into Canada and Alaska.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1 Each Parks division that designs, constructs, or maintains landscapes shall provide targets and objectives annually to the Superintendent that demonstrate the division's commitment to increasing the use of native plants in developed parks and natural areas, and the benefits of using native plants.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 Seattle Parks and Recreation aims to achieve landscapes with 80% native plantings in developed parks and/or landscape areas through all design, construction, and maintenance. with the following exceptions:
 - 6.1.1 athletic fields and developed turf areas,
 - 6.1.2 designated community and horticultural gardens (e.g., P-Patches and Japanese Garden),
 - 6.1.3 parks and arboreta with horticultural plant collections and interpretive displays,
 - 6.1.4 significant floral displays (e.g. "showcase" floral beds or borders), and historic and cultural landscapes such as Olmsted parks,
 - 6.1.5 parks with vegetation management plans not conducive to a native vegetated landscape, or
 - 6.1.6 other parks as approved by the Superintendent.
- 6.2 Parks shall continue to use and maintain 100% native species for plantings in natural area design, construction, restoration, and rehabilitation, and will use and acquire only species native to Puget Sound lowlands, wetlands, forests, and grasslands, as appropriate to the site conditions.

- 6.3 Native plantings will consist of trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, bulbs, and ferns in any combination. The 80% percent target will be determined, on a site by site basis, through analysis of the available planting areas excluding designed hardscapes and turf areas, and shall typically be expressed as a percentage of the total plants in a park or site renovation area. Species composition will be temporally dependent as landscapes change over time, requiring adaptive management for aspects of the site including sun, shade, slope, canopy coverage, and other factors.
- 6.4 Native plant selection will be appropriate for site conditions, including but not limited to aspects of the site including sun, shade, slope, soil structure, and available moisture from rainfall or irrigation.
- 6.5 Native plants used in landscapes will be obtained from local propagators and nurseries, if feasible.
- 6.6 For horticultural projects designed and/or constructed, the applicability of Parks Design Standard 02950-01 “The Design of Sustainable Plantings within Functional Landscapes” will be reviewed.

7.0 APPENDICES

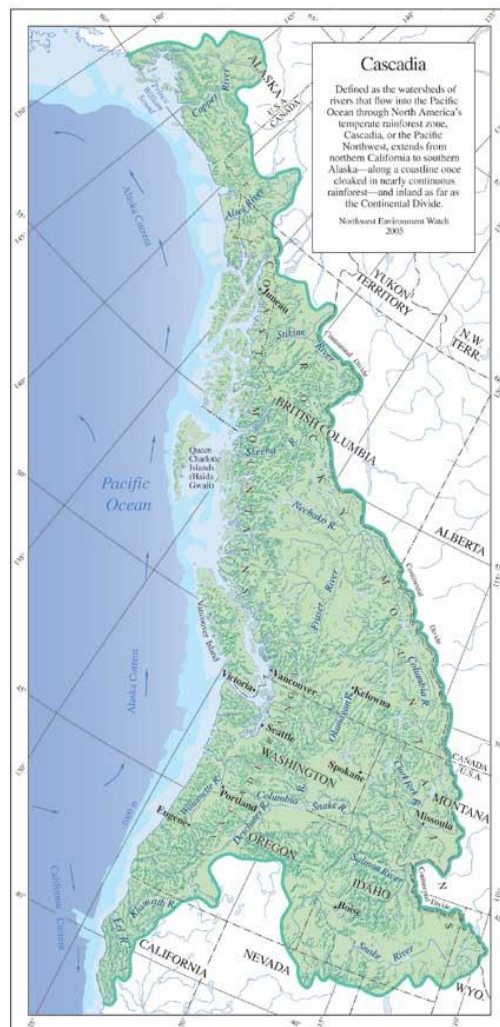
- 7.1 Reference: Parks Design Standard 02950-01 “The Design of Sustainable Plantings within Functional Landscapes”
(<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/projects/standards/specs.asp>)
- 7.2 Native Plant Information, References and Stakeholders
 - 7.2.1 Washington Native Plant Society, 6310 NE 74th St., #215E, Seattle, WA. 98115, 206-527-3210, www.wnps.org
 - 7.2.2 Northwest Horticultural Society, PO Box 4597, Rolling Bay, WA. 98061, 206-780-8172, www.northwesthort.org
 - 7.2.3 Seattle Urban Nature Project, 5218 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105, 206-522-0334, www.seattleurbannature.org
 - 7.2.4 King County, WA: Native Plant Guide, <http://green.kingcounty.gov/GoNative/Index.aspx>
 - 7.2.5 Washington State University Master Gardener: Northwest Native Plant Guide, <http://gardening.wsu.edu/nwnative/>

Attachment 1

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cascadia>

“As an ecological bioregion

The concept of Cascadia is closely identified with the environmental movement. To counter what some environmental movements see as improper stewardship of the land, they have defined what is called the Cascadia **Bioregion** (also referred to as the Pacific Northwest Bioregion). This area would encompass all or portions of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Wyoming, Montana, Alaska, British Columbia, and Alberta. Bioregions are geographically based areas defined by land or soil composition, watershed, climate, flora, and fauna. The Cascadia Bioregion claims the entire watershed of the Columbia River (as far as the Continental Divide), as well as the Cascade Range from Northern California well into Canada. The delineation of a bioregion has environmental stewardship as its primary goal, with the belief that political boundaries should match ecological boundaries. Environmental sustainability appears to be a central tenet. “



Map drawn by
Cynthia Thomas on
the basis of forest
data in Conservation
International, Ecotrust, and
Pacific GIS, "Coastal
Temperate Rain Forests of
North America,"
Portland, 1995. See also
David D. McCloskey,
"Cascadia," Cascadia
Institute, Seattle, 1988.

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